

POLICY

Subject: Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and

Voluntary ISO 14001 EMS Model

Approved By: DENR Secretary

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Revised:

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An environmental management system (EMS) is an integrated system by which an organization can address and continually improve its environmental performance. ISO 14001, a voluntary international standard, provides a framework for effective environmental management systems to assist organizations in achieving both environmental and economic goals. In addition to ISO 14001, corporate and other EMS models exist that may achieve similar results.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) mission is "to provide leadership, education and advocacy for the responsible stewardship of North Carolina's environment and natural resources." DENR seeks to support its mission:

- Through clear and effective communication with our customers and throughout DENR
- By encouraging new ideas and solutions
- By working cooperatively to reach common goals, and
- By delivering services of the highest quality.

The adoption of EMSs by North Carolina organizations furthers DENR's vision of a healthy environment and a vibrant economy. While DENR commits significant resources working with facilities on regulatory compliance and monitoring, activities beyond compliance that move organizations towards environmental sustainability are desirable.

Regulations address only a portion of environmental impacts. An organization implementing an EMS identifies and addresses non-regulated as well as regulated activities and impacts. EMSs may result in additional benefits by enhancing compliance, increasing employee environmental awareness, improving efficiency, increasing pollution prevention activities and other innovations, identifying cost savings, and by more responsible problem resolution.

Given the benefits of an EMS to the environment, to the implementing organization, and to the state, DENR strongly supports EMSs. DENR believes that EMSs can promote sound environmental practices and lead to improved environmental performance. For organizations which adopt the voluntary ISO 14001 international standard, DENR recognizes the advantages to North Carolina's economic competitiveness, both nationally and internationally. Therefore, DENR will seek to encourage the implementation of effective EMSs by organizations. DENR will educate its customers and DENR employees, and will explore incentives that promote the adoption of EMSs to achieve performance beyond compliance.